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RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0131
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SUBJECT: WEST NUSA TENGGARA: VICE PRESIDENT'S FINGERPRINTS ON ANOTHER GOLKAR DEFEAT

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This message is sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

¶11. (SBU) Summary: Incumbency has proved to be more of a millstone than an advantage for the once preeminent Golkar Party in a series of gubernatorial elections across Eastern Indonesia.

On July 7, West Nusa Tenggara witnessed the fifth and most recent defeat for an incumbent Governor, in this case supported by Golkar and the Indonesia Democratic Party of Struggle. Corruption in Governor Lalu Serinata's administration, a revolt in his own party and a popular challenger in cleric Zainul Majdi helped tip the balance. The challenger was endorsed by the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) and the Crescent Start Party (PBB). An anti-incumbent mood and strong support from Lombok's majority Muslim population were the keys to victory according to local sources. End Summary

¶12. (SBU) The Golkar-supported incumbent lost the West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) Governor's race July 7 to a 36 year old cleric supported by two Islamic parties. For the Golkar Party this brings the total of recent Golkar provincial losses to five: East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), West Java, South Sulawesi and North Maluku. Rumored behind-the-scenes support from Vice President Jusuf Kalla allowed incumbent Lalu Serinata to run as Golkar's candidate, despite open revolt by local Golkar cadre. Early returns show that challengers Zainul Majdi and Badrul Munir -- endorsed by the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) and the Crescent Star Party (PBB) -- received 37 percent of the vote. The incumbent, Lalu Serinata and Husni Djibril -- supported by Golkar, Party of Democratic Struggle for Indonesia (PDIP), the Reform Star Party (PBR), and the Patriot Party -- came in second with 28.68 percent. Systemic problems with administration of the election will be covered septel.

Corruption Cost Golkar

¶13. (SBU) The Chair of NTB's Indonesian Hindu Association, I Gusti Lanang Media, told Congen Surabaya that many Golkar cadres in NTB were lukewarm at best about nominating incumbent Lalu Serinata and his involvement in a well-publicized corruption case didn't help. Lalu Serinata was brought in for questioning repeatedly by provincial as well as national prosecutors regarding his alleged involvement in embezzling Rp 25 billion (USD 2.7 million) while he was chairman of NTB Parliament from 2001-2003. Days after being chosen as Golkar's candidate for reelection, he was summoned by the National Prosecutor's office for questioning in the case. Vice President Jusuf Kalla (also Chairman of National Golkar) reportedly did not waver in his

support for Lalu Serinata, despite local opinion and the clouds gathering over the governor's mansion. Mr. Nasihudin, Personal Secretary to the Governor-elect, told Congen Surabaya that National Golkar in Jakarta had transferred Rp. 10 billion (USD 1 million) to NTB Golkar three days prior to election.

Local Culture Was Decisive

¶4. (SBU) The Prosperous Justice and Crescent Star Parties married their strategy to local culture. Their nomination of Muhammad Zainul Majdi, a charismatic young cleric from a famous Islamic boarding school, represented hope for change in the province. According to local media and Congen Surabaya sources, this approach was in sharp contrast to the business-as-usual style adopted by Golkar. Majdi's PKS and PBB supporters made use of the existing leadership role held by Majdi as a teacher or Tuan Guru in Lombok. Mr. Nasihudin told Congen Surabaya that Majdi prevailed because of voter disgust with corruption coupled with a deep respect for Majdi as a Tuan Guru capable of setting things right. Seen from a political perspective, by visiting rural villages and giving public sermons on moral issues over the course of the past 10 years, Majdi had built up a wide base of support and developed name recognition and popularity throughout NTB's villages. According to Nasihudin, Governor Lalu Serinata rarely visited the villages and when he did he was escorted by policemen and bodyguards.

Introducing NTB's Governor Elect: Muhammad Zainul Majdi

¶5. (U) Tuan Guru Muhammad Zainul Majdi, was born in Pancor, East Lombok, NTB, on May 31, 1972. He is the third son of Siti Rauhun Zainuddin Abdul Majid, the leader of Nahdlatul Watan Pesantren. Majdi studied at his father's pesantren until he left for

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studies in Egypt. He earned a Master's degree in Koranic Studies from Al-Azhar University in Cairo in 2000. He was Rector of the Institut Agama Islam Hamzanwadi in Pancor, East Lombok, and in 2004 was named chairman of NTB Nadhlatul Watan and member of Commission X of DPR- Jakarta. Majdi is married and has three daughters and one son.

MCCLELLAND